



**THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON**

September 7, 2010

**MEMORANDUM FOR UNDER SECRETARIES, ASSISTANT SECRETARIES, OTHER
KEY OFFICIALS, AND FIELD FACILITY DIRECTORS**

SUBJECT: Employment of Individuals with Disabilities

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is committed to maintaining our position as a leader in the Federal Government in hiring and maintaining a diverse workforce that reflects the great diversity in America. That diversity includes people with disabilities. We are also determined to fully support President Obama's Executive Order of July 26, 2010, to increase Federal employment of individuals with disabilities, especially those with serious, targeted disabilities.

Practically speaking, targeted disabilities include deafness, blindness, partial and total paralysis, missing limbs, distorted limbs or spine, mental disabilities, and convulsive disorders. VA is already doing well among the Cabinet-level Departments in the employment of individuals with targeted disabilities, particularly disabled Veterans. I especially commend the Veterans Benefits Administration, which has the highest ratio of employees with targeted disabilities – 2.36 percent of their permanent workforce. The Department's overall ratio is at 1.47 percent. Although this is better than the government-wide average of less than one percent, I am confident that we can do better.

As a Department, we are in a unique position to accomplish the goals of the President's Executive Order while simultaneously meeting those we have previously established in VA's strategic plan goals for hiring a greater percentage of Veterans, including those who have been disabled either in service or after their period of service.

Therefore, I am setting a goal of 2 percent for hiring persons with targeted disabilities in fiscal year (FY) 2011, in accordance with the VA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. And as we increase our recruiting and hiring of Veterans and other Americans with targeted disabilities, we must also work harder to retain these employees.

Tantamount to the success of this initiative is your support and commitment. I am asking each of you to personally place emphasis on the importance of hiring a greater percentage of qualified people with disabilities and targeted disabilities, especially those who are Veterans.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion will monitor and keep me advised, on a quarterly basis, of VA's progress in the hiring, advancement, and retention of persons with targeted disabilities. The Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration will issue additional guidance and information no later than September 15, 2010. Their point of contact for further information on this initiative is Christy Compton (202) 461-4131.

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I appreciate your support of the President's order and VA's important goals. Making significant progress in this initiative is good for Americans with disabilities, good for Veterans, and good for our country.



Eric K. Shinseki